

2025-05-05 Board of Selectmen Minutes

Town of Canterbury, NH
Board of Selectmen
Date: 2025 May 5
Location: Meeting House

Selectmen: Scott Doherty (Chair), Beth Blair, Calvin Todd

Town Administrator: Ken Folsom

Others Present: Edgar Rivera (Libertad Press NE), Louis Audet, Alice Todd, Kenneth Smith, Brian Gaessler, Tyson Miller (via Zoom)

1. Call to Order
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.
2. Louis Audet re Abatement Application for Map 258 Lot 12 on New Road
 - a. See Selectboard minutes 4/21/25 section 5 for previous discussion.
 - b. Ken spoke with Mr. Audet last week. He is requesting \$40K as a refund for taxes he feels were paid in error going back to 2006.
 - c. Mr. Audet and the Selectboard discussed why he didn't notice this issue earlier. Mr. Audet filed for abatements on his other property in 2006 and 2009, so he is aware of the abatement process and looks at his tax cards. Mr. Audet argued that he assumed the spike in the 2006 bill was due to increased taxes not a change in evaluation.
 - d. The mistake in evaluation was found when the person trying to purchase Map 258 Lot 12 from Mr. Audet spoke with Assessor Mandy Irving last year. Mr. Audet said that he had spoken with Mandy previously and she had never mentioned that there was a buildable area on the lot. He said that his tax bills never indicated that there was buildable area on the lot.
 - e. Beth expressed skepticism about his reasoning; she thinks that generally the burden is on the property owner to review their taxes and Mr. Audet has shown he knows how to do that since he has questioned other things.
 - f. Mr. Audet said he only remembers doing one abatement request. There was some discussion about which one he remembered. The records show he did it twice: once in 2006 for his residence at 140 New Road and again in 2009 for the 2008 tax year on the same residence.
 - g. There was some confusion about how many lots were involved. Eventually it was determined that Map 258 Lot 12 is 141 acres. Most of that is in current use and labeled as backland, but about 9.5 acres was not put into current use and that is the area considered buildable. Map 258 Lot 12 was created in 1999 when Mr. Audet subdivided his larger lot into 3 smaller ones: two house lots and one backland (Lot 12).
 - h. When a re-evaluation happens, letters are sent out to all property owners with the latest information. Re-evaluations occur every 5 years. Since the mistake in 2005, there have been 5 revals. Mr. Audet claimed that the letters didn't indicate that the 9.5 acres was buildable.
 - i. Calvin questioned why those 9.5 acres weren't included in current use when the subdivision happened.
 - j. Scott did not feel Mr. Audet's reasons for not noticing the mistake for 18 years were valid.
 - k. Beth asked to see the notices that get sent out with the reval and so she could doublecheck that everything had been noticed properly.
 - l. There was some confusion about how much the bill went up in 2006. The assessed value increased by \$110,048 and the taxes increased from about \$400 to about \$2K.
 - m. Calvin asked to see the current use application.

- n. Scott agreed with Beth and Calvin that more information was needed. Ken will get copies of the notices and current use application.
- 3. Email to Senate Finance Committee
 - a. Alice Todd (School Board Member) would like the Selectboard to sign a letter to the State Senate Finance Committee to advocate for more funding for schools from the State.
 - b. The Senate Finance Committee meets every other year and these letters started in 2021. The Committee is meeting tomorrow, so if the Selectboard wish to sign, they would need to do so tonight. There were about 432 signatures as of 5:13 this evening.
 - c. Calvin made a motion to sign the letter. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
 - d. Kal submitted the Selectboard's signatures through an online form.
- 4. Offer to purchase property Map 102 Lot 71
 - a. Kenneth Smith attended.
 - b. Scott read the offer letter from 5/2/25 aloud. Mr. Smith is offering \$4K for Map 102 Lot 71. He included a copy of the purchase and sales agreement showing that he is buying Map 102 Lot 72.
 - c. Mr. Smith explained that he grew up on Blue Boar Lane and would like to move back to the neighborhood. He is buying Map 102 Lot 72 and would like to buy Lot 71 at the same time and combine them into one.
 - d. Ken explained that if the Selectboard agreed to the sale, they would need to wait until the purchase of Lot 72 was complete, then they could do the sale for Lot 71 and combine the lots. The paperwork for the sale of Lot 71 would include the condition that it must be combined with Lot 72.
 - e. Scott make a motion to accept Mr. Smith's bid of \$4K for Map 102 Lot 71 contingent upon the sale of Lot 72, the deed restrictions discussed, and that the sale of Lot 71 must be completed within 90 days. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- 5. Administration
 - a. The Selectboard signed:
 - i. Beth made a motion to sign the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$30,855.07. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
 - ii. Beth made a motion to sign the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$604,167.50. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
 - 1. This includes the school payment, transfer to the Tax Collector's office for liens (which is for accounting not an actual payment), and T1 repairs (T1 is back and functional).
 - iii. Yield Tax Levy for Map 231 Lot 1 and 2 in the amount of \$5,788.02.
 - iv. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber for Map 205 Lot 3.
 - v. Beth made a motion to sign the Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$56,849.14. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
 - b. Previous Minutes Approval
 - i. Kal indicated that the only suggested changes to the 4/21 minutes were spelling/grammar.
 - ii. Scott made a motion to approve the public minutes as amended for the Selectboard meeting on April 21, 2025. Calvin seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
 - iii. Scott made a motion to approve the non-public minutes for the Selectboard meeting on April 21, 2025. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- 6. New Business
 - a. Treasure House Issue
 - i. On April 30th, Rich Marcou (Solid Waste Committee Chair) sent an email to Ken regarding the Treasure House at the Transfer Station. Ken forwarded the email to the Selectboard.
 - ii. The Treasure House has begun accepting electrical items. Rich is concerned that this is a way for people to sidestep the fee that the Transfer Station charges for those items and that the Treasure House has no outlets so they can't make sure the items work.

- iii. The Selectboard agreed that corded items shouldn't be accepted by the Treasure House.
- iv. There was some discussion about if the SWC runs the Treasure House or if it is a separate group of volunteers. There doesn't appear to be a written policy about what they do/don't take. Volunteers at the Treasure House are supposed to sign a waiver. Historically, if the Transfer Station charges a fee for an item, then the Treasure House won't accept it.
- v. Madeleine Lowe has been coordinating the volunteers for the Treasure House. Beth will talk to her about this.
- vi. Ken will pass on to the SWC that corded items should not be accepted.
- b. Friends of Canterbury Center Events
 - i. The Friends of Canterbury Center are sponsoring a number of musical events and a 4th of July celebration in the Center this year. In the past, these events have had an informal BYOB ("bring your own beer" meaning that eventgoers can bring alcoholic beverages with them to consume, but none will be provided or sold at the event) and they wanted to check with the Selectboard that this could continue without requiring a police officer on site.
 - ii. Ken explained that the Police Chief didn't think this was a problem. There are no open container laws in the Town or the State. Any other laws around alcoholic beverages would be enforced (e.g. driving under the influence).
 - iii. There was discussion about how this compares to the Farmers Market occasionally having a vendor sell sealed bottles/cans and provide 2 ounce samples for drinking on-site. The main difference here is that these events would be BYOB.
 - iv. BYOB would allow people to buy sealed drinks from the Canterbury Country Store and then drink once they have left the property of the Store.
 - v. Scott moved to allow BYOB alcohol without having a Police Officer present for the Friends of Canterbury Center events occurring on 6/26, 7/5, 7/17, 8/7, and 8/28. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

7. Old Business

- a. Code of Conduct
 - i. See Selectboard minutes 4/21/25 section 7.a. for previous discussion.
 - ii. Kal summarized changes that had been proposed. Mostly organizational and grammatical. The title is now Code of Conduct, not Code of Ethics.
 - iii. Beth wanted the document to specify that if a board commits to grant work, then they need to follow through with the paperwork. Kal added "ensuring the completion of tasks required by law" to the duties of the Chair.
 - iv. The Selectboard decided that the Planning Board representative should vote based on what they think is best for the town, rather than trying to predict what the rest of the Selectboard may decide.
 - v. The duties specific to the Selectboard will be pulled out into a job description instead of including it in the document meant for everyone. This can be used as a template job description for other boards.
 - vi. The time commitment for Selectboard will be listed as "substantial" instead of trying to actually determine how many hours they put in.
- b. Discontinued Roads
 - i. See Selectboard minutes 4/21/25 section 5.b. for previous discussion.
 - ii. Calvin summarized the research he has been doing on this topic since the last meeting. He has been going to the State Archives, speaking with legal and land use folks, etc. A lot of the issues we are experiencing are in legal gray areas. He is going to continue his research, but so far is thinking that the Selectboard should consider meeting with the Planning Board, etc. and proposing a warrant article to clean some of these roads up.

- iii. There are 17 roads on the list from Wayne Mann which were discontinued before the 1962 law change. 7 of those roads are on our 2023 map as discontinued. 9 or 10 were done after 1950 and are thus subject to bars and gates.
- iv. Scott thanked Calvin for his work. Calvin will keep the Selectboard posted on his progress.
- c. Sam Lake House Garage Bids
 - i. See Selectboard minutes 4/7/25 section 7.e. for previous discussion.
 - ii. Bidding was open from April 7th to May 1st. 2 bids were received from contractors and 2 from electricians.
 - iii. Scott opened the bids from the two contractors.
 - 1. Peter Galatis
 - 1. \$58K for the project and provided additional costs for synthetic slate, Hardie board, and cement.
 - 2. Mr. Galatis did the gutters on the Meeting House last year and has worked on the Municipal Building and Elkins Memorial Building.
 - 2. Daniel Remilard of Shaker Heights Custom Homes LLC in Boscawen
 - 1. \$49K for the project. Indicated that cement siding would reduce the cost by \$1,500.
 - 2. Ken has seen a lot of Mr. Remilard's work in Boscawen and it seems good. The Building Inspectors in that town like him.
 - 3. Work on the interior couldn't begin until August 1st so that the Canterbury Fair would have time to store their items elsewhere after this year's Fair on July 26th.
 - iv. Scott opened the bids from the two electricians.
 - 1. Ken explained that both electricians did site visits and have done good work for the Town previously.
 - 2. Copperhead Electrical Services in Loudon
 - 1. \$7,500 with the idea that the Town (Highway Dept.) will dig the trench.
 - 3. Trusted Electrical Services LLC in Stratford
 - 1. \$6K including them digging the trench rather than the Town
 - v. Ken explained that Highway may put additional parking in between the current lot and the Sam Lake House Garage since the lawn will be getting torn up anyway with the trucks and the digging.
 - vi. Ken contacted two HVAC companies, but they haven't gotten back with bids yet.
 - vii. The HVAC in the Meeting House in 2022 was \$7,500. In the Historical Society room of the Library in 2023 it was \$6,700. Even if the prices go up to \$10K, considering the other estimates, we should be able to stay within the \$80K budgeted in WA 2025-11.
 - viii. There was discussion about the specs of what each contractor was planning on using. Calvin was concerned about the quality of materials they intended to use and the potential for unexcepted costs caused by lead and tariffs. He wanted to understand why there was such a big difference in the cost estimates.
 - ix. The Selectboard will email Ken with questions to relay to the contractors by the end of the week. They will make a decision about which bids to accept at their next meeting.
- d. Update 367 Shaker Road
 - i. See Selectboard minutes 4/21/25 section 6.b. for previous discussion.
 - ii. Ken spoke with the owners of the property and they felt that they are not violating the zoning ordinance.
 - iii. Ken sent this to the Town's attorney and they sent back a draft cease and desist letter.
 - iv. The Selectboard agreed to send the letter to the owners of the property. The attorney will send it via certified and regular mail.
- e. CPCNH Representative
 - i. See Selectboard minutes 4/15/25 section 9.c. for previous discussion.

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- ii. It is approaching the time of year when a representative will need to start attending meetings, so the Town needs to designate new reps soon.
- iii. Beth will bring this up at the Energy Committee and Community Power Committee joint meeting that is coming up. She will also contact Tom Franco and Howard Moffett to find out more about the job description.
- iv. The meetings are always during the day on a weekday and usually last about an hour. Zoom is an option. The meetings were monthly initially but have been irregular lately.
- f. Land Acknowledgement
 - i. See Selectboard minutes 4/21/25 section 7.b. for previous discussion.
 - ii. Evan Christensen provided links for the Selectboard to review. Beth was able to review them before the meeting.
 - iii. Beth explained that the organization promoting the idea of land acknowledgements emphasizes that the acknowledgment should be accompanied by actions, not just a token gesture. She isn't sure what actions they mean and she is hesitant to do this in case it is committing the Town to something else. She said she supports this idea aside from that reservation.
 - iv. Scott agreed.
 - v. Beth will send an email to Evan to get some more information about the goal and extent of this project.
- g. The letter to the Meeh's regarding Shell Meetinghouse Road has not been sent out yet. (See 4/21/25 section 5.b.)
- 8. Adjournment
 - a. Scott made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

Next Meeting: 2025 May 19, 6:00 p.m. at the Meeting House

Minutes submitted by Kathleen McKay, Administrative Assistant